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ABSTRACT

A study investigated the effectiveness of structured viewing of television news on listening comprehension in English as a Second Language (ESL), as compared with the effectiveness of standard listening comprehension materials. Subjects were 66 students aged 18-22 in diverse disciplines, 34 in the experimental group and 32 in a control group. Listening proficiency was pre-tested and post-tested using two standardized tests. The experimental group was taught, in part, using recordings of television news and related worksheets and vocabulary lists. The control group was taught using several sets of commercial listening comprehension materials. Both groups were also surveyed concerning their perceptions of general course activities and listening instruction. Results indicate both groups made significant progress in development of listening skills, with the experimental group making more progress, although statistically non-significant, than the control group. A greater range of effect was found in the control group. However, the experimental group reported both more interest in the listening materials used and greater feeling of improvement than did the control group, suggesting that use of television news recordings had a positive influence on student motivation. Materials used in testing, instruction, and the survey are appended. (MSE)

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City Polytechnic of Hong Kong
Department of English

Research Report No. 14

ACTION RESEARCH: A STUDY ON USING TV NEWS TO IMPROVE LISTENING PROFICIENCY

Anita Poon
May 1992

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ABSTRACT

Listening has been a skill traditionally neglected in language instruction, but it is the language skill used most in daily communication. Good and appropriate listening materials are still scarce compared to those for reading, writing and speaking skills. Using authentic materials is an effective way of helping students increase listening proficiency, and TV has played an important role in second language learning. Among all kinds of authentic material, TV news is a more preferable choice in training the listening skill in ESL because it is current, interesting and closely related to students' daily experience, thus providing an intrinsic reason for them to listen. The present study is an experiment conducted on a group of students at City Polytechnic Of Hong Kong to find out whether structured viewing of TV news will have greater effects on students' general listening proficiency than will standard listening comprehension materials.

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1. Introduction

1.1 Action research

> The linking of the terms "action" and "research" highlights the essential feature of the approach: trying out ideas in practice as a means of improvement and as a means of increasing knowledge about the curriculum, teaching, and learning. The result is improvement in what happens in the classroom and school, and better articulation and justification of the educational rationale for what goes on. Action research provides a way of working which links theory and practice into the one whole: ideas-in-action.
>
> (Kemmis and McTaggart, 1988: 6)

Action research focuses on a specific situation within the context of classroom and school rather than on generalized issues in education. Unlike traditional academic research, action research does not remain at the theoretical level, but departs from an idea which leads to action in the classroom, with a view to improving teaching, learning or the curriculum. Thus, theory and practice are combined. The researchers are not outsiders who come to observe and give comments, but rather the teachers themselves, who participate, reflect and evaluate their own work, hoping to find solutions to their problems while furthering their professional development (Carr and Kemmis, 1986; Hustler, Cassidy and Cuff, 1986; Kemmis and McTaggart, 1988; Richards and Nunan,

1990).

1.2 Teaching and research

How to marry teaching and research is a perennial problem for all academics. Teaching without doing research, teachers may become contented with what they have attained and thus devote no time to exploring new theories and methods in their field. They may also have difficulty in conceptualizing practical experience in theoretical terms. Research without teaching can make one's view of theoretical matters abstract and far-fetched. The researcher may not be able to detect the problems that genuinely puzzle the teacher in the classroom. Krashen (1982) admits that "many researchers are no longer involved in language teaching and language acquisition, and do not interact with teachers ... we [they] have, in the past, gone straight from theory to practice, and it simply has not worked" (p. 5). He cites some well-known examples of this approach, such as the audio-lingual method, a direct application of the principles of behaviourist psychology in the classroom, and the "applied transformational grammar" movement, which features materials directly based on theoretical syntax and phonology (p. 5). To combine theory and practice is, therefore, particularly important to the field of English as a Second Language (ESL). Wright (1991) points out that there always exists some tension between the teacher and the researcher, as there is a tendency to mystify research. It is, however, necessary for practitioners to demystify the notion of research and apply what is being researched to the classroom. It is with

this purpose in mind that the researcher engaged in the present action research project.

1.3 Overview

This paper describes an action research project on listening by the author in five sections. The first section attempts to probe into the practical as well as the theoretical needs of conducting an experiment on listening. The second section introduces the research topic and the hypothesis of the study. The third section describes the research methods and the procedures. The fourth section reports the descriptive, statistical and attitudinal results of the study. The fifth section discusses the significance of the results, the limitations of the study and the implications of the study for ESL, while also exploring further areas of research.

2. Reasons for conducting an experiment on listening

2.1 Practical level

As Morley (1990) points out, listening has been a skill traditionally neglected in language instruction, and the first "modern-day concerns" about this area did not appear until the mid-1960s (p. 319). Although listening materials have largely been developed in the last two decades, good and appropriate listening materials are still scarce compared to those for reading, writing and speaking skills.

The English Foundation Programme, a supplementary English programme at City Polytechnic of Hong Kong (CPHK), provides teachers the opportunity to explore innovative methods and develop materials tailor-made for a particular group of students whose abilities and proficiency in English are mixed and interests in English vary enormously. Since the limited materials available leave much room for exploration in listening, it is of value to try out new methods and develop new materials for students who may be discouraged with the conventional teaching methods and materials which they have already experienced in secondary schools. To find interesting materials and effective methods to motivate CPHK students is therefore a legitimate reason for engaging in this action research project.

2.2 Theoretical level

2.2.1 Authentic material

Another reason for carrying out the research is consistent with a belief in the value of employing authentic materials in the teaching of listening comprehension. Listening is the language skill used most in daily communication -- twice as much time as speaking, four times as much as reading, and five times as much as writing (Weaver 1972; Rivers 1981). Far from simply being a passive skill of receiving information, listening is in fact a language act in real-world communication, in which "the listener is actively involved in either two-way interactive communication or one-way reactive communication" (Morley, 1990: 331). What

makes listening difficult is that it is not only a linguistic skill, but also "a cognitive and social skill" (Rost, 1990: 11). So "development of listening ability involves the balanced enactment of linguistic, ideational, and interpersonal domains of language" (Rost, 1990: 153). Exposing students more to authentic materials and bringing them into closer contact with **real** language as it is used in the real world definitely provides more chances for them to learn how to make the non-linguistic judgments that listening essentially requires and that might be lacking in the standard listening course. Thus, as Kerridge (1982: 121) observes:

> Authentic video materials, if chosen and exploited with care, can play an important part in modern English language teaching. However, used without due thought or preparation, they can become an expensive waste of time for both teachers and learners.

Lonergan (1984) points out that radio and TV have in fact played an important role in foreign language learning. TV programmes are widely used in ESL in the United States and Britain. Yet little research has been carried out in this area (Stempleski and Arcario, forthcoming: 5). According to a survey administered to members of the Association of Recognized English Language Schools and English language teaching units within British tertiary institutions between August 1979 and March 1990, 75% of institutions used video to develop extensive listening and 73% intensive listening. Allen (1985) concludes that "video is found

most helpful in developing aural/oral skills, particularly listening skills" (p. 8). So the current trend is to employ video materials to teach listening comprehension.

2.2.2 Listener intent

Listening is traditionally viewed as a passive skill, and the listener is regarded as a mere recipient of information. But as Rost (1990) points out, the role of the listener in the act of understanding has been distorted, and according to cognitive science, understanding in verbal communication is a construction process in which the listener takes an active role in contextualizing the signals of the speaker. According to Rost (1990: 156):

> The development of listening ability ... must account for the development of generating commitment through speech events. What this means is that the development of listening skill must involve a growing initiative on the part of the learner to interact ... Instruction will involve a principled theory of intervention that seeks to set listener intent into motion.

Therefore, listener intent is the crux of teaching L2 listening comprehension. How to "set listener intent into motion" (Rost, 1990) relies heavily on the teaching method as well as the materials adopted by the teacher. TV news, a popular form of authentic material, is about people's daily concerns, unlike

certain topics in the standard listening course, thus providing an intrinsic reason for students to listen. Once they have the intent to listen, the job of the teacher is half done.

2.2.3 Comprehensible input

Krashen's Monitor hypothesis (1982) suggests that "formal rules, or conscious learning, plays only a limited role in second language performance" (p. 16). Accordingly, learning some micro-listening skills in class is definitely not enough for a student to be able to make relevant interpretations of language in actual social contexts. What is more important is constant exposure to the target language. However, it is not input per se that contributes to second language acquisition, but "comprehensible input" (Krashen, 1982; Long, 1985) that contains "messages that students really want to hear" (Krashen, 1982: 7). As mentioned in Section 2.2.2, TV news, an interesting type of authentic material, can be a good source of comprehensible input that contains a structure somewhat beyond students' current level of competence (i+1) (Krashen, 1982). As Krashen (1982: 21) notes, listening ability is acquired "with the help of context or extra-linguistic information", i.e., the visual and auditory cues.

2.2.4 Power of listening ability

In a study on the power of listening ability, Feyten (1991) examines the relationship between listening ability and overall foreign language proficiency. The results suggest a positive

relationship between listening ability and foreign language acquisition. Therefore, it is of paramount importance to help language students enhance their listening ability. Since using authentic materials is believed to be an effective means of increasing listening proficiency, it is of value to investigate different forms of instruction based on authentic materials, such as the present experiment.

3. Research topic

This research tests the feasibility of using locally produced TV news as the basis for listening exercises for tertiary level English Foundation students in Hong Kong.

3.1 Why choose locally produced TV news

Among all kinds of authentic material, news is a more preferable choice in training the listening skill in ESL because news has become an imminent part of modern life, and listening to TV/radio news has become our daily activity. As Findahl (1983) points out, "most people have a genuine interest in trying to understand what the news is about" (p. 262). It is this interest in getting more information about the world around us that motivates people to listen to TV/radio news and holds their attention while listening. Unlike conventional classroom listening materials, the content of news provides an intrinsic reason for people to listen:

> If lessons feature things that have relevance, the more they may appeal to students and the better the chances of having learners' ears really **tuned in**. If students really want to listen, we have accomplished part of the task. (Morley, 1990: 332)

Of the two options, TV and radio news, the former is generally preferred. For all its colourful and attractive images on the screen, TV news is more appealing and powerful than radio news. As Geddes (1982: 63) puts it:

> ...on video the speaker's presence was more immediate and real than on audio tape. The student could listen to an embodied rather than a disembodied voice, a **talking head** instead of merely a voice.

The TV news programme seems a better choice for the listening purpose than other TV programmes -- for example, drama -- because of the moderate speed of the presenter as well as the standard English spoken by the presenter. Moreover, the language used in the news programme is less informal, rendering a much easier job for the non-native speakers of English. Besides, news is less culture-specific than drama.

Some people might also wonder why the local TV news production, not the foreign production, is preferred -- for example, America's Cable News Network (CNN) news, which is also transmitted on one of the local channels. The answer is simple.

Much of the TV news programme produced abroad is alien to local people, as the choice of news items and the way of reporting them are generally culture-bound.

For all these reasons, the locally produced TV news has been chosen as the material used in the present experiment.

3.2 Hypothesis

The hypothesis of the study is that stuctured TV viewing will have greater effects on students' general listening proficiency than will standard listening comprehension materials. Since TV news programmes are current, interesting and closely related to students' daily experience, it is hypothesized that students will therefore be more motivated to listen to an English TV programme than to standard listening materials, thus eventually increasing their listening power to a greater extent than through traditional materials.

4. Methods and procedures

4.1 Subjects

An experiment was performed between the end of November, 1990, and mid-March, 1991. The data were drawn from 66 subjects, 34 in an experimental group and another 32 in a control group. The experiment started off with 89 subjects, all of whom were students of the English Foundation Programme at CPHK. They were

first-year students from nine different classes, namely, two classes of the Higher Diploma in Mechanical Engineering, one class of the Higher Diploma in Business Studies, one class of the Higher Diploma in Applied Science, two classes of the Bachelor of Arts in Accountancy, one class of the Higher Diploma in Translation and Interpretation, one class of the Higher Diploma in Applied Statistics and one class of the Bachelor of Arts in Business Studies. 44 were males and 45 were females, and they were within the age bracket of 18 to 22.

Students of the degree courses had all sat for both the Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination (HKCEE, equivalent to the O-Level Examination of Britain's General Certificate of Education) and the Hong Kong Advanced Level Examination (HKALE, equivalent to the A-Level Examination of Britain's GCE) before entering CPHK. Students of the higher diploma courses had all sat the HKCEE and only some of them had sat the HKALE. All first-year students of CPHK before 1990 had to take an English test, namely, the City Polytechnic Diagnostic English Examination (CIPOLDEX) after they were admitted to study. The subjects of the present investigation took the CIPOLDEX in September, 1990. Because of their unsatisfactory marks on CIPOLDEX, the subjects were placed in the English Foundation Programme, a supplementary English programme aiming at enhancing students' general English proficiency with a view to assisting them eventually in their own studies. There was a diversity in the English standard of the subjects as well as in their interest in English, which varied from course to course and from class to class, despite the fact

that they were all put in the same programme.

The 89 subjects of the experiment were drawn from nine intact groups. The sample was not taken randomly from the general population of the students in the English Foundation Programme at CPHK in the academic year 1990-91. Rather, they were all students scheduled in the researcher's classes. Fortunately, the sample comprised a reasonably wide spread of members from the three faculties which CPHK is currently composed of, namely, the Faculty of Business, the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences and the Faculty of Science and Technology. The subjects were divided into two groups, one comprising five classes as the experimental group (43 subjects), and the other comprising four classes as the control group (46 subjects). This was done randomly by an academic staff member who did not know the classes or the students.*

As noted above, the experiment started off with 89 subjects, with 43 in the experimental group and 46 in the control group. After 3 weeks, the timetable of the two classes of the Higher Diploma in Mechanical Engineering students changed, and they had to stop attending the English Foundation Programme temporarily, so the number of subjects was forced to drop from 89 to 68, with 8 lost from the experimental group and 13 lost from the control group. The number later dipped further down to 66 as a result of 2 students dropping the courses, 1 each from the experimental group and the control group. So the mortality rate of the subjects was 25.8%, which might affect the outcome of the experiment.

4.2 Instrumentation

In order to find out whether the treatment given to the experimental group was superior to that given to the control group as hypothesized, an instrument was required to measure the subjects' level of proficiency in listening comprehension before the experiment as well as the progress made, if any, during the experiment.

In order to guarantee a reliable result, the instrument had to be a reliable one, so standardized tests, the reliability and validity of which were already assessed, were selected. Since a pre-test and a post-test had to be conducted, the former to determine the initial listening proficiency of the subjects and the latter to see if their listening proficiency had improved during the course of the experiment, standardized tests containing two different versions were preferable. Nevertheless, good listening materials do not abound, let alone appropriate standardized testing materials with two different versions. It was thus difficult to find the appropriate instrument.

The listening segments of some public examinations, for example, the Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination (HKCEE), the Hong Kong Advanced Level Examination (HKALE) and Test Of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), were first considered. The HKCEE appeared too easy for the subjects, and the researcher had no access to the actual TOEFL test materials. The HKALE seemed the most suitable in terms of its level, but quite a number of the

subjects had taken the HKALE in the preceding two years. After several consultations with the Reader of the English Department** to discuss the available options, an older version (1984) of that test was chosen as an appropriate instrument for the study. Since the listening papers of the old syllabus (pre-1989) of the HKALE tested mainly the note-taking skills of the students on a variety of academic topics, it seemed desirable to find a complementary instrument testing other listening skills so as to make the instrumentation of the study a more comprehensive and effective one. Other possibilities were then explored. The placement tests of some local tertiary institutes were considered, but these existed in only one version and were not easily accessible. Finally, the Oxford Placement Test (1985), Parts 1 & 2, which tested mainly listening skills, was determined to be a suitable test for the experiment.

Thus, the instrument used in this study consisted of two entire standardized listening tests taken from (a) the Hong Kong Advanced Level Examination (1984) (b) the Oxford Placement Test Parts 1 & 2 (1985). The first instrument was a content-based test involving an eleven-minute talk on dreams. After listening twice to the talk, the subjects were given sixteen conventional-type listening comprehension questions to answer (Appendix 1). The second test was an eight-minute skills-based test, which mainly tested sound discriminations. There were one hundred items in the test and in each item there were a pair of words similar in sound. The subjects were asked to underline the correct answer while listening, as the tape was played once only (Appendix 2).

4.3 Listening materials used in class

4.3.1 Experimental group

The late news of ATV, one of the two local TV stations, was recorded once a week as teaching content for the experimental group. Each news programme lasted about thirteen minutes, including both local and international news. The number of news items in each programme ranged from seven to thirteen. A worksheet (Appendix 3) was issued to each subject in every lesson and formed the basis of the treatment (Section 4.4.2.1). A transparency on which some vocabulary of the programme was written was shown to the class (Appendix 4).

4.3.2 Control group

It was necessary to ensure that the listening materials for the control group would not be similar, either in content or format, to the materials used in the experimental group and in the tests. With this criterion in mind, the following course books suitable for English Foundation Programme students were examined:

(1) M. Geddes (1984). How to Listen. BBC English by radio and TV.
(2) D. Scarbrough (1984). Reasons for Listening. Cambridge University Press.
(3) L. Blundell and J. Stokes (1981). Task Listening. Cambridge University Press.
(4) S. Rixon (1987). Listening (Upper-intermediate). Oxford

University Press.

How to Listen is based on extracts from authentic BBC world Service radio programmes. As has been noted previously, authentic materials should be reserved for the experimental group only. Therefore, this programme was not selected.

Reasons for Listening covers a variety of situations where the listener does not interact directly with a speaker -- for example, when listening to news broadcasts, public announcements, radio commentaries, discussion programmes, radio and TV interviews. The non-interactive nature of the materials, especially the part on news broadcasts, overlaps with that of the materials used in the experimental group. Therefore, this material was rejected for the experiment.

Task Listening is a task-based course on a number of daily life situations, for example, finding the way, shopping. The content as well as the format of exercises are totally different from those of the tests and the materials for the experimental group. Nonetheless, the integrated approach of the course lends too little support to the listening skill, and there is only one task for listening in each unit. The other tasks focus on the other three skills. As a result, this course was deemed unsuitable.

After careful examination, S. Rixon's Listening (Upper Intermediate) was found to be the most suitable course for the control group in this study. The book is designed to give

students experience of a variety of speech styles and listening situations, including informal conversations, discussions and interviews. The materials are task-based and problem-solving focused with an emphasis on fluency. Out of the fifteen units, five were selected as topics of common interest, i.e. 'Job Stereotypes' (In Part 1, six people talk about their jobs and others' prejudices against their jobs; in Part 2, a sociologist being interviewed talks about a survey on children's attitudes towards different professions), 'Hot Stuff' (A woman tells her story about growing her own food), 'A Post-Industrial Industry' (Two experts talk about the problems of a post-industrial industry in Malaysia and their solutions), 'Home Computers' (A woman talks about her experiences with a home computer), and 'My Computer Makes Me Sick' (The selection is about the dangers of computer use, based on surveys conducted on professional and amateur users of computers).

4.4 Procedures

4.4.1 General procedure

The experiment covered a period of ten teaching weeks from the end of November 1990 to mid-March, 1991, during which time there was a term break of three weeks and a one-week Easter holiday. Both the experimental and the control groups were taught by the same teacher, i.e., the researcher herself. The classes met once a week for two hours. The listening segment that formed the experimental and the control treatments was the first segment of

the two-hour class, in which all four skills were addressed. Aside from the treatment given in class, subjects were not assigned any listening activities outside class because there was no guarantee that all subjects would carry out the assigned activities. The teaching methods used in the experimental group deliberately avoided those employed in the control group. The contents as well as the formats of materials were also deliberately made different in the experimental group and the control group.

The two-part pre-test was administered to both the experimental and the control groups before the treatments started so as to determine the initial listening proficiency of the subjects. The two-part post-test was likewise administered after the treatments were given in order to decide whether the experimental group had made more progress in their listening proficiency than had the control group, as hypothesized.

4.4.2 Lesson plan

The listening segment in both the experimental and the control groups lasted fifty minutes in each class period. The procedure of conducting the lesson in the experimental group was planned by the researcher, whereas that in the control group basically followed the recommendations of the standard listening course (Appendix 5).

4.4.2.1 Experimental group

The listening segment of the experimental group was conducted according to the following steps:

(1) Issue a worksheet to subjects.
(2) Previewing -- Before the first viewing, ask subjects to pay attention to the number of news items and their topics in the programme.
(3) 1st viewing -- Let subjects watch the whole programme once.
(4) Ask subjects to write down the number of news items and topics on the worksheet.
(5) Elicit the correct number of news items and topics from the group.
(6) Before the second viewing, ask the subjects to pay attention to the main ideas of several (about four to five) news items.
(7) 2nd viewing -- Let subjects watch the selected news items again. Pause after each individual news item.
(8) Ask subjects to write down the main ideas of the news items and vocabulary or names used in each item on the worksheet.
(9) Elicit a brief oral summary of each news item included in the second viewing. Discuss the vocabulary or names used in these items with the group.
(10) Ask the group whether they understand the news better. If not, let them watch the selected items the third time.

4.4.2.2 Control group

Each unit of the standard listening course, i.e., S. Rixon's Listening (Upper-intermediate), has three main phases: (1) pre-listening (2) listening (3) follow-up. Subjects were asked to fill out grids and charts, choose the correct answers, rank the order of priority of certain items, etc. Certain listening skills were practised, for example, prediction, listening for main ideas and details, recognizing tone of voice and attitude. Pair work was emphasized.

4.5 Assessment

4.5.1 How the tests were administered

In both the pre-test and the post-test, the Hong Kong A-Level Examination was administered first, followed by the Oxford Placement Test. The audiotape of the Hong Kong A-Level Examination was played twice. After listening, subjects were issued the test papers, on which there were sixteen conventional-type questions, and they were given twenty minutes to answer the questions. After the scripts were collected, the subjects were issued the question papers of the Oxford Placement Test, on which there were one hundred sentences. The tape was played once only and subjects were asked to underline the correct answer in each sentence while listening. The scripts were collected as soon as the tape stopped, and subjects were not given extra time to make any alterations.

4.5.2 How the scripts were marked

The scripts of both the pre-test and the post-test were marked at approximately the same time to minimize the possible effects of marking at different times.

4.5.2.1 Hong Kong A-Level Examination

Since the questions were not objective-type questions, this test was marked by two persons, the researcher and a lecturer of English at another tertiary institution***, to balance out any subjective element associated with marking by a single scorer. The scripts were randomized so that the subjects could in no way be identified by the scorers. The marks given by one scorer were sealed off and were not accessible to the other scorer, so that an independent and objective assessment was guaranteed.

4.5.2.2 Oxford Placement Test

Since the questions were objective-type questions, this test was marked by the researcher.

4.5.3 Marking scheme

Both the Hong Kong A-Level Examination paper and the Oxford Placement Test paper that made up the test carried an equal amount of weight, i.e., 50 marks for each paper, and each question in each paper also carried an equal weight.

4.6 Attitudinal questionnaire

The subjects were asked to fill out a questionnaire at the end of the course. The questionnaire comprised nine questions regarding the subjects' responses to the course as a whole and to the listening segment of the lesson, i.e., the experimental treatment (Appendix 6).

4.7 Analytical procedures

Mean improvement and factorial Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) were calculated on the subjects' test scores. The statistical tests were run using the SPSS/PC+ routines. The attitudinal questionnaire responses were analyzed by the researcher.

5. Results

5.1 Descriptive results

The procedure of mean improvement was performed on the subjects' test scores for the factors of (1) Test (pre-test vs post-test) and (2) Group (experimental vs control). The descriptive results are shown in Tables 1 and 2 as follows:

Subject	Score of Pre-test	Score of Post-test	Score of Improvement
01	70	69	-1
02	57	62	+5
03	50	72	+22
04	65	78	+13
05	59	71	+12
06	59	73	+14
07	55	68	+13
08	70	74	+4
09	47	50	+3
10	56	62	+6
11	58	56	-2
12	59	63	+4
13	60	57	-3
14	49	59	+10
15	68	75	+7
16	61	69	+8
17	62	74	+12
18	61	62	+1
19	69	71	+2
20	68	67	-1
21	67	69	+2
22	54	53	-1
23	59	53	-6
24	42	53	+11
25	43	55	+12
26	49	70	+21
27	63	65	+2
28	61	67	+6
29	40	50	+10
30	54	68	+14
31	57	72	+15
32	37	52	+15
33	57	83	+26
34	35	54	+19

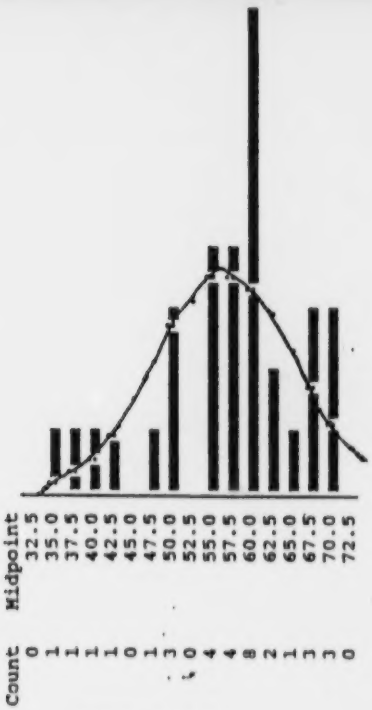
Table 1 Mean Improvement of Experimental Group

(Mean Improvement $\overline{X}$=+8.09)

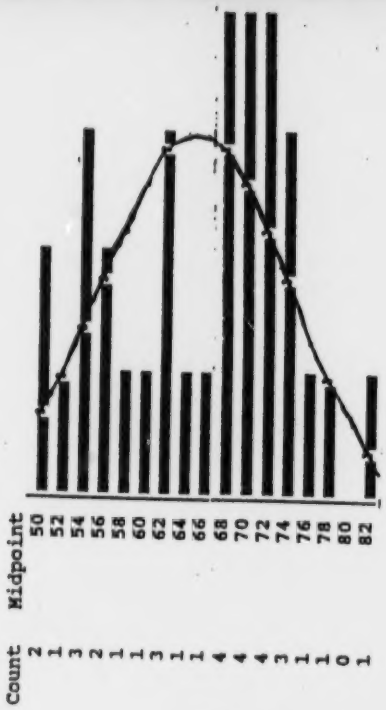
Subject	Score of Pre-test	Score of Post-test	Score of Improvement
35	71	71	0
36	67	64	-3
37	68	66	-2
38	51	66	+15
39	58	57	-1
40	79	76	-3
41	49	71	+22
42	61	64	+3
43	80	81	+1
44	64	84	+20
45	75	77	+2
46	62	67	+5
47	79	76	-3
48	82	74	-8
49	72	69	-3
50	74	74	0
51	63	44	-19
52	48	50	+2
53	60	61	+1
54	33	42	+9
55	48	48	0
56	67	65	-2
57	50	52	+2
58	65	59	-6
59	50	53	+3
60	54	68	+14
61	57	64	+7
62	54	46	-8
63	46	49	+3
64	66	78	+12
65	43	53	+10
66	46	47	+1

Table 2 Mean Improvement of Control Group

(Mean Improvement $\bar{X}$=+2.31)

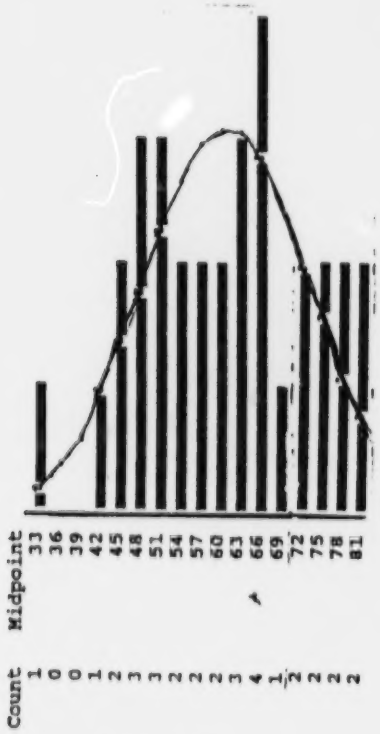


Pre-test

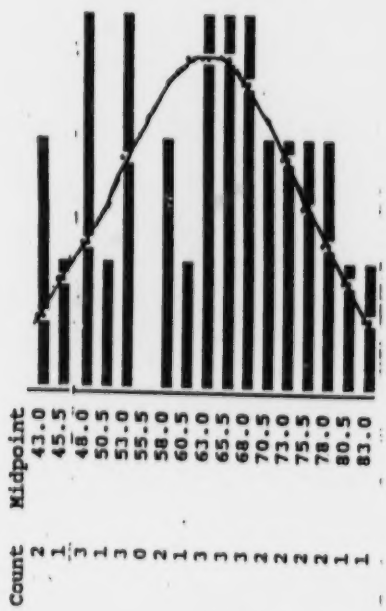


Post-test

Histograms of Experimental Group



Pre-test



Post-test

Histograms of Control Group

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Of the 34 subjects in the experimental group, 28 show positive improvement in the post-test and 6 show negative improvement. The mean improvement of the experimental group is +8.09(post-test s.d.=8.710). The range of score improvement is from -6 to +26, so there is a difference of 32 score points between the strongest subject and the weakest subject. Of the 32 subjects in the control group, 18 show positive improvement in the post-test, 11 show negative improvement, and 3 show no improvement. The mean improvement of the control group is +2.31(post-test s.d.=11.791).

The mean improvement of both the experimental group and the control group is positive, which means both the experimental method of using locally produced TV news programmes to teach listening comprehension and the conventional method of using standard materials to teach listening comprehension are effective. If we compare the mean improvement of both groups, the experimental group is greater (+8.09) than the control group (+2.31), as hypothesized. But whether the hypothesis can be established statistically needs further analysis.

5.2 Statistical results

All the samples show a distribution of scores which approximate to normal distribution. Thus, it is possible to perform ANOVA on the data of the study. The procedure of factorial ANOVA was performed on the subjects' test scores for the factors of (1) Test (pre-test vs post-test) and Group (experimental vs control). Both main effects and interactions were tested for significance,

Both main effects and interactions were tested for significance, with the decision level for statistical significance set at p=.05.

Table 3 is a summary of the significance levels of the main effects and interactions of the analysis of variance of the scores by Group (experimental, control) and by Test (pre-test, post-test).

SPSS/PC+

*** ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE ***

BY SCORE

TEST

GROUP

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	DF	Mean Square	F	Signif of F
Main Effects	978.422	2	489.211	4.319	.01
TEST	922.735	1	922.735	8.146	.001
GROUP	55.687	1	55.687	.492	.48
2-way Interactions	274.960	1	274.960	2.427	.12
TEST GROUP	274.960	1	274.960	2.427	.12
Explained	1253.382	3	417.794	3.688	.01
Residual	14499.610	128	113.278		
Total	15752.992	131	120.252		

Table 3 Analysis of Variance

The main effect of Group did not reach significance (F=.492; p=.48), but the effect of Test was found to be significant (F=8.146; p=.001).

As for interactions, the 2-way interaction of Test x Group did not reach significance (F=2.427; p=.12). Therefore, its influence on the main effects can be excluded from further consideration.

5.3 Attitudinal results

Do you think your listening ability has improved after doing the listening exercises?

The responses of the experimental group and the control group are as follows:

	Experimental Group	Control Group
Yes	22	13
A little bit	9	5
Not very much	1	1
No	1	2
Don't know	1	1
No response	0	10

In relation to the listening segment, the subjects were asked to evaluate the whole course, which addresses the four skills.

Which activities do you like the best in this course? Why?

In response to this question, 13 out of 34 subjects in the experimental group chose listening because it was interesting, whereas only 2 out of 32 subjects in the control group chose listening.

Which activities do you like the least in this course? Why?

In response to this question, 4 out of 34 subjects in the experimental group chose listening because it was boring, whereas 12 out of 32 subjects in the control group chose listening.

Do you find this course interesting, boring or neither one of them? Why?

	Experimental Group	Control Group
Interesting	18	13
Sometimes interesting	5	5
Sometimes boring	5	3
Boring	1	0
Neither	4	5
No response	1	6

Of the 23 subjects from the experimental group who found the course interesting/sometimes interesting, 6 provided the following reasons:

> Learn a lot of things in class, e.g. current affairs.
>
> A lot of chances for discussion.

A variety of ways and devices are used, e.g. video, camera, role plays, group work, newspapers.

Unlike the regular English module, the style of this class is free.

Of the 18 subjects from the control group who found the course interesting/sometimes interesting, 8 gave the following reasons:

Unlike the regular English module.

Not much pressure.

Do you find this course useful, useless or neither one of them? Why?

	Experimental Group	Control Group
Very useful	2	1
Useful	26	23
Useful to a certain extent	3	2
Useless	0	0
Neither	1	0

The subjects from the experimental group who were positive about the course provided the following reasons:

Improve English

More chances to practise English

Learn much about English

Learn a lot of vocabulary

Learn to be more critical in analysing current affairs

The subjects from the control group who were positive about the course gave the following reasons:

Learn much about English

Improve listening and speaking skills

Improve English through the media

6. Discussion

6.1 Comparison of descriptive results and statistical results

Both descriptive and statistical results indicate the significance of Test in both the experimental and the control groups, i.e., subjects in both groups have made significant progress in their listening proficiency after being given separate treatments. As regards the Group effects, the descriptive results indicate that the experimental group ($\overline{X}$=+8.09) has made more progress than the control group ($\overline{X}$= +2.31). 16 out of 34 subjects in the experimental group have made an improvement of more than 10 score points, which is, by all means, a considerable progress within such a short period of time. By contrast, only 5 out of 32 subjects in the control group have gained more than 10 score points in the post-test. The histograms in Section 5.1 indicate a graphically greater progress in the experimental group than in the control group. But rather surprisingly, the improvement of the groups did not reach a

significant level according to the statistical results (p=.48). Therefore, the hypothesis that structured viewing of locally produced TV news will have greater effects on students' general listening proficiency than will standard listening comprehension materials cannot be statistically established. However, the significance of Test (p=.001) as well as the positive descriptive results prove that structured viewing of locally produced TV news is at least as effective as the standard listening course.

What then possibly has affected the statistical results? First, if we look at the scores of the pre-test and the post-test (Tables 1 and 2 and Histograms) for each individual, we will find that there is a greater range of improvement scores in the control group than in the experimental group, with score improvement ranging from -6 to +26 for the experimental group and from -19 to +22 for the control group. Second, within the experimental group, the range of scores for each test is not great. The scores range from 35 to 70 in the pre-test and from 50 to 83 in the post-test. The range of scores in the control group shows a somewhat greater range but is similar in the pre-test and the post-test -- from 33 to 82 in the pre-test and from 42 to 84 in the post-test. The compression of range, expecially in the experimental group, is possibly a contributing factor of the non-significant statistical results.

6.2 Significance of attitudinal results

As Van Lier (1984) puts it, "In any balanced research

quantitative and qualitative techniques may inform each other" (p.118). Since statistics failed to support the claim that structured viewing of locally produced TV news will have greater effects on students' general listening proficiency than will standard listening comprehension materials (Section 6.1), it is of value to look at the attitudinal results of the study. The subjects in the experimental group were on the whole more interested and more actively involved in the listening class than those in the control group. At times we were engaged in hot discussions over the heated issues brought up in the news programme, for example, the Gulf Crisis, the Chak Lap Kok airport project, and the increased armed robbery rate in Hong Kong. Feedback from the subjects themselves confirms this observation. More subjects from the experimental group than from the control group found the listening class interesting and accordingly felt that their listening ability had improved (Section 5.3). The fact that 10 out of 32 subjects in the control group did not respond to the question about whether they thought that their listening ability had improved after doing the listening exercises may be indicative of their lack of enthusiasm (Section 5.3). This in turn had some influence on their attitudes towards the whole course. Therefore, more subjects from the experimental group found the course interesting and beneficial (Section 5.3). If interest is aroused, students may go ahead and watch TV programmes on their own, thus eventually increasing their listening proficiency. In this light, one can consider the experiment at least a partial success.

6.3 Limitations of the study

The following are a number of factors beyond the control of the experimenter that might have affected the outcome of the experiment:

6.3.1 Time

The actual time spent on the experiment was only 500 minutes (8 1/3 hours) -- ten weeks and fifty minutes a week. The reason for such a short time is that all the subjects were the students of the English Foundation Programme, a fifteen-week course, in which students attend classes once a week for two hours. Since it is a comprehensive course in which four skills are addressed, fifty minutes is the maximum amount of time allotted to the listening skill in each session. The reason why the experiment lasted ten weeks instead of fifteen is that certain classes were cancelled once or twice because of holidays or big college events like the graduation ceremony. Besides, time had to be spared for the pre-test and post-test both before and after the treatment. So only a limited amount of time was available for the actual experiment.

6.3.2 Attrition

As stated before, 23 out of 89 subjects dropped out in the course of the experiment. Such a high mortality rate (25.8%) might have had an effect on the outcome of the experiment.

6.3.3 Sample size

As a result of the high mortality rate, the sample size shrank from 89 to 66, with 34 in the experimental group and 32 in the control group. The small size of the sample contributes to the little variance of the experimental and the control groups, which might have affected the statistical results.

6.3.4 Uncontrollable variable

Apart from the listening treatments given in the English Foundation Programme, all subjects were obliged to take a regular English module in the first year. They might also have had some listening practice using standard materials in their regular English classes. Besides, other chances of listening to English outside class cannot be ruled out. For example, some subjects might have the habit of watching English TV news or other English TV programmes. Some might listen to English radio news or other English radio programmes regularly. Or, though less likely, some might have English native speaker friends, with whom they constantly practise their English. The following question in the attitudinal questionnaire addresses this problem:

Besides doing listening exercises in class, do you listen to other English programmes regularly? If 'yes', what? How often?

13 out of 34 subjects in the experimental group responded 'yes' although only 2 of them indicated that they did it regularly. 15

out of 32 subjects in the control group responded 'yes' although only 3 of them indicated that they did it regularly.

All in all, this uncontrollable variable of having chances to listen to English other than those given in the treatments might have affected the results, although there is no reason to assume that it would have effected the two groups differentially.

6.3.5 Attendance

Since the English Foundation Programme is a non-credit bearing and voluntary course, students tend to pay less regard to it than other classes. The attendance of the classes is by no means under the control of the researcher. Fortunately, the attendance was quite good. The attendance rate ranged from 68% to 93%, and the average rate was 85%. The attendance could have been better if the subjects had been aware of the experiment and told to co-operate. But the researcher preferred the experiment to take a natural course because the performance of the subjects might have been affected if they were alarmed, as Kazdin (1982: 83) puts it, as in reactive experimental arrangements, there is "the possibility that subjects are aware that they are participating in an investigation and that this knowledge may bear on the generability of the results". This is one of the major threats to external validity.

6.3.6 Motivation

Motivation is another factor that plays a decisive role in determining learners' progress as regards language learning. The learners' motivation is in turn affected by various factors, for example, whether the language they learn is closely related to their own field, whether the language class is interestingly run, whether they are competent enough in using the language, whether their previous experience in learning the language is good enough. The motivation of the subjects in this study varies tremendously from class to class and from individual to individual. On the whole, subjects from the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences and the Faculty of Business are more interested in English because they are comparatively more competent in using the language and English is more relevant and closely related to their own disciplines. On the contrary, subjects from the Faculty of Science and Technology show less interest in English as English is less crucial to their studies. There are of course exceptions. Out of the four Business classes in this study, half contain students who are highly motivated to learn English and half do not; and some subjects in one of the science classes are exceptionally keen. Motivation definitely has a role to play in the subjects' progress of listening proficiency.

6.4 Implications for ESL

6.4.1 Easy and interesting source of listening materials

As mentioned in Section 2.1, the language teacher always faces the problem of an insufficient supply of listening materials. Since TV news is free and easily accessible, it can be used for teaching purposes both inside and outside the classroom.

Besides, listening to TV news, a type of authentic material as advocated by authors such as Kerridge (1982) and Rost (1990), is a good way to arouse students' interest in listening, thus eventually helping them increase their ability to make relevant interpretations of language in actual social contexts.

6.4.2. Integrative teaching

As video is an effective means to stimulate further activities, particularly videos on social or political issues (Sheerin, 1982: 124), TV news can be used integratively with materials aimed at developing other skills. For example, students can be assigned to read related news stories or articles in the English newspaper followed by a discussion or debate in class. After thoroughly probing into certain issues, a follow-up written task can be assigned as a round-up to the topic.

6.4.3 Listening and foreign language acquisition

As suggested by Feyten (1991), a positive relationship exists between listening ability and foreign language acquisition (Section 2.2.3). Accordingly, structured viewing of locally produced TV news helps students improve not only their listening proficiency, as hypothesized, but also their general foreign language proficiency.

6.5 Value of action research

After engaging in the present action research, the researcher found that performing an experiment in the classroom gave more stimulus and input to teaching. Because of its nature of trying out new ideas and innovative approaches, the teacher-researcher had to spend a lot of time designing the course and developing materials. In the course of the research, the researcher had to read more books, theoretical and practical alike, and dig deeper into the research topic, thus gaining more knowledge and insight in the area of listening. This in turn shed a new light on teaching. To help the teacher keep improving teaching is in fact the ultimate aim of action research, and the researcher admits that she has benefited greatly in the whole process.

One would tend to be contented with what one has attained. Without being involved in action research, a teacher might easily stick to the old materials that have been used time and again, especially when s/he has had considerable experience in teaching.

And action research can help curb this tendency.

As for the students, the researcher felt that her keen attitude and excitement vis-à-vis the research had an impact on the students, most of whom treated the course in a serious manner. At times when some students seemed to be slackening, the researcher disciplined them. Good attendance is indeed a sufficient, though not necessary, condition for a good attainment in studies. The necessary condition, therefore, owes a lot to the teaching method. A teacher engaging in action research is more likely to introduce innovative and interesting teaching methods that students will benefit from. As a matter of fact, some students who were from the experimental group saluted the researcher in the corridor one year after the experiment, thanking her for teaching them how to watch TV news because they have become interested in it since then and now find TV news much easier to understand.

6.6 Further areas of research

As time is the greatest constraint of the present study, it is recommended to replicate the experiment for a longer period of time, for example, six months, with more hours of listening practice every week. Improvement would be more easily detected with a larger sample. The study could be further extended to subjects with different levels of listening proficiency -- for example, upper secondary students, tertiary students who do not have to take supplementary English.

Research on exploring possibilities of using other types of authentic materials -- for example, TV documentaries -- to teach listening, is also recommended. Besides, it would be interesting to compare TV news and radio news so as to find out whether the video or the audio mode is a better way of helping students increase their listening proficiency.

Apart from listening proficiency, attitudinal effects of the treatment should also be looked into. An instrument could be divised to measure whether subjects' attitude towards English learning as a whole has changed after the experiment. If so, the study itself would have wider implications in ESL than simply in the area of listening comprehension.

7. Conclusion

Although the statistical results for the factor of Group (experimental vs control) did not reach a significant level, the study suggests that the approach of using TV news to teach listening comprehension is a promising one for Hong Kong tertiary students. It is at least as effective as the conventional approach, if not better, as the statistical results for the factor of Test (pre-test vs post-test) proved significant. Besides, the positive descriptive results and attitudinal results further affirm that TV news is an effective means to motivate students to listen, thus eventually increasing their listening power to a greater extent than traditional materials. Therefore, this method is worth experimenting with and can also be

recommended for ESL listening classes.

Last but far from least, to marry theory and practice is crucial to the field of ESL. This belief of the researcher was reinforced in the course of the experiment. Hence, action research is a possible direction for all ESL professionals to consider.

Notes:

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Appendix 1:

HONG KONG EXAMINATIONS AUTHORITY

USE OF ENGLISH EXAMINATION 1984

LISTENING TEST

First Session

Candidate Number	
Centre Number	
Seat Number	

For Examiner's Use Only		
Total Marks		
Examiner's Number		

1. *Write your Candidate Number, Centre Number and Seat Number in the spaces provided.*
2. *Answer ALL questions.*
3. *Write your answers in the spaces provided in this question paper.*
4. *You need not write in complete sentences.*

For Checker's Use Only		
Total Marks		
Checker's Initials		

For Marker's Use Only

Session	Score	Marker Number
1		

Write your answers in the spaces provided. You need not write in complete sentences.

Writing time : **20 minutes.**
Marks : **20% of the total marks for the Use of English Examination.**

First Session

Marks

1. Who made the first attempts at explaining tooth dreams?

_____

_____ 1

2. In ancient times what were tooth dreams always supposed to warn people about?

_____

_____ 1

3. The lecturer says that the belief primitive people have about tooth dreams is logical. What example does he give?

_____

_____ 1

4. In modern times what is the further general anxiety that tooth dreams have been said to reflect?

_____

_____ 1

5. Freud, Jung and Adler each gave interpretations of the flying dream. Describe two of these interpretations:

(a) _____

_____ 1

(b) _____

_____ 1

6. When is someone most likely to have a falling dream?

_____

_____ 1

	Marks
7. How does Freud explain the falling dream? _____ _____	1
8. When one sees someone else falling in a dream, what did Adler claim that this meant? _____ _____	1
9. When do examination dreams normally occur? _____ _____	1
10. How do people usually feel : (a) while they are having an examination dream? (b) when they wake up after an examination dream? (a) _____ _____	1
(b) _____ _____	1
11. Why can examination dreams sometimes be beneficial? _____ _____	1
12. Briefly describe the lecturer's example of a typical coming-too-late dream. _____ _____	1
13. Psychologists say coming-too-late dreams frequently occur in two situations. What are these situations? (a) _____ _____	1
(b) _____ _____	1

	Marks
14. The lecturer gives two examples of situations in which people might have a recurring dream. What are these examples?	
(a) _____	
_____	1
(b) _____	
_____	1
15. Once the event predicted in a recurring dream actually happens, what is generally the result?	
_____	
_____	1
16. The lecturer concludes with one reservation about the interpretation of the typical dream. What is this reservation?	
_____	
_____	1
(20 marks) Score	

END OF PAPER

HONG KONG EXAMINATIONS AUTHORITY

USE OF ENGLISH EXAMINATION 1984

LISTENING TEST

Second Session

Candidate Number	
Centre Number	
Seat Number	

For Examiner's Use Only		
Total Marks		
Examiner's Number		

For Checker's Use Only		
Total Marks		
Checker's Initials		

1. *Write your Candidate Number, Centre Number and Seat Number in the spaces provided.*
2. *Answer ALL questions.*
3. *Write your answers in the spaces provided in this question paper.*
4. *You need not write in complete sentences.*

For Marker's Use Only		
Session	Score	Marker Number
2		

Write your answers in the spaces provided. You need not write in complete sentences.

Writing time : **20 minutes.**
Marks : **20% of the total marks for the Use of English Examination.**

Second Session

	Marks
1. The lecturer and his research team aimed to answer two main questions. State one of these.	
_____	1
_____	
2. There are two main reasons for the transport setting to appear in dreams. What are these reasons?	
(a) _____	1
_____	
(b) _____	1
_____	
3. People in transport dreams are either 'passengers' or 'drivers'. How do 'drivers' often see their relationship with the world?	
_____	1
_____	
4. Dreamers sometimes crash the vehicles they are 'driving'. What does this mean?	
_____	1
_____	
5. A number of examples are given of situations in which people are likely to have bridge-crossing dreams. Give two of these examples.	
(a) _____	1
_____	
(b) _____	1
_____	

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Marks

6. Why do people rarely dream about work?

_____

_____ 1

7. What is the most popular setting for dreams?

_____

_____ 1

8. If a dream is set in a basement, what might this tell us about the dreamer?

_____

_____ 1

9. How many people, including the dreamer, would one expect to appear in a typical dream?

_____

_____ 1

10. Why do family members often appear in dreams?

_____

_____ 1

11. Young people dream about their parents for two main reasons. What are these reasons?

(a) _____

_____ 1

(b) _____

_____ 1

12. Why do we not dream about famous people or current affairs?

_____

_____ 1

	Marks
13. State two of the reasons for dreaming about a casual acquaintance.	
(a) _____	
_____	1
(b) _____	
_____	1
14. Under what circumstances would the same person appear more frequently in someone's dreams?	
_____	
_____	1
15. What is the lecturer's main conclusion about dreams?	
_____	
_____	1
16. The lecturer concludes his talk with a warning about interpreting dreams. What is this warning?	
_____	
_____	1
(20 marks) Score	

END OF PAPER

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Oxford Placement Test 1 A

Look at the example below. Listen to the tape. You will hear the example *once* only. Decide which word you hear, 'soap', or 'soup'.

a Will you get me some soap / soup at the supermarket?

The word was 'soup', so 'soup' is underlined. Now look at these examples, and listen to the tape again. This time, you underline the words you hear. For example, if you hear 'shorts' underline 'shorts'.

b The team need new shirts / shorts.

c They've recently developed a new kind of vine / wine around here.

The words on the tape were 'shorts' and 'vine', so the correct answers look like this:

b The team need new shirts / shorts.

c They've recently developed a new kind of vine / wine around here.

Now the test will begin. Listen to the tape and underline the words you hear.

1 I gather you've been having trouble with your earring / hearing.

2 A number of students are expected to join the advanced composition / conversation class.

3 This beard of mine is awfully itchy. I'll be glad when it goes / grows.

4 I doubt if he's very comfortable in his present / prison bed.

5 Have you played Dennis / tennis very much recently?

6 Look at that woman! What a size / sight she is!

7 Do you have any idea how long ago it was found / founded?

8 Your letter must have crossed with my own / mine.

1 ...
2 ...
3 ...
4 ...
5 ...
6 ...
7 ...
8 ...

Name .....

Total A .... / 100 Total B1 .... / 50 Grand total .... / ....
Total B2 .... / 50

9 One thing I really loved / loathed in the late seventies was the style of the clothes.

10 My sister says he's / she's a very nice person.

11 That Dutch friend of mine you met yesterday is a very good chess / jazz player.

12 The tube from Liverpool St. to Holborn costs 30p / 40p.

13 Can I have 20 No.6 / Embassy please?

14 Today's a holiday / horrid day, isn't it?

15 Well, I wonder what joys / choice they have in store for us this time.

16 Only 30% of housewives can / can't tell the difference between margarine and butter.

17 I can't really say if I like jazz or not. sometimes / some kinds I do.

18 She's been quite tearful / cheerful the last couple of weeks.

19 Borg now seems unlikely to regain / retain his title.

20 I think it's Dave / Steve on the phone. ✔

21 Why / Where are you going to live in London?

22 It is recommended that dyslexic students follow a remedial reading / writing option.

23 Do you have any idea where my class / glass is?

24 The court heard that Polanski had had a very depraved / deprived childhood.

25 I can see / consent to it if it has to be done.

9 ...
10 ...
11 ...
12 ...
13 ...
14 ...
15 ...
16 ...
17 ...
18 ...
19 ...
20 ...
21 ...
22 ...
23 ...
24 ...
25 ...

Subtotal .... / 25

26 I see the [peaches | pictures] are starting to go yellow.

27 If it hadn't been for him they [couldn't | wouldn't] have done it.

28 Have you got any more of this [blended | splendid] butter?

29 I don't think the management side took any [notes | notice].

30 At the end of this test the papers will be [corrected | collected] by the invigilators.

31 The early trans-continental trains were often delayed by [engine | Indian] trouble.

32 During his holidays he spends most of his time at the Lotus test track [watching | washing] cars.

33 Recently Barry Sheene has taken to wearing an [all-leather | all-weather] suit for all his races.

34 Mind you don't tread on the [glass | grass].

35 You've got a [lash | rash] just under your eye.

36 Do you think you could [take | talk] us through the next bit of the film?

37 How many [tests | texts] are we going to need to get all the data we want?

38 There's a fishery somewhere round here where they [hatch | catch] trout by the thousand.

26 ...
27 ...
28 ...
29 ...
30 ...
31 ...
32 ...
33 ...
34 ...
35 ...
36 ...
37 ...
38 ...

39 Sue [Barker | Parker] was knocked out in the 3rd round of the singles.

40 Do you think we could have [two minibuses | too many buses] for the summer courses?

41 Do you think Rick's place is still [buyable | viable]?

42 One of the lecturers in the sociology department is writing a book on the old [Board School | Borstal] system.

43 [I reckon | Eric and] I need a good holiday.

44 This horse will have to be [shod | shot] immediately.

45 Can you get me some [sealing tape | ceiling paint] when you're in town?

46 Even if he leaves the country he won't be safe from [persecution | prosecution].

47 Since the accident the only thing he can do is [menial | manual] work.

48 She's very much the ["committee" | committed] type.

49 You can get quite a [view | few] from up here.

50 What can we do with this [lot | slot] to make the timetable work? ✔

39 ...
40 ...
41 ...
42 ...
43 ...
44 ...
45 ...
46 ...
47 ...
48 ...
49 ...
50 ...

Subtotal ... / 25

51 Keegan was cheered | chaired off at the end of the match.

52 The future of BL now seems to depend on delegate | delicate decisions to be worked out at local level.

53 Have you done much riding | writing recently?

54 Who starts. Whose darts for double top?

55 What we have here is essentially a fiscal | physical problem.

56 Make sure you keep the ropes tied | tight.

57 I think they set | sat the exam last week.

58 You'll need a mass of | massive cheese to make a fondue for that many people.

59 I can't really advise you without knowing the type of context | contacts you're presupposing.

60 If the gods | guards are with us we should make it.

61 I thought his behaviour was unexceptional | unexceptionable.

62 Look at the clouds | crowds over there.

63 Her ambition is to become a belly | ballet dancer.

64 Did you get a chance to try | dry it out?

51 ...
52 ...
53 ...
54 ...
55 ...
56 ...
57 ...
58 ...
59 ...
60 ...
61 ...
62 ...
63 ...
64 ...

65 If you look very carefully you can see there used to be a cabinet | cabin up there.

66 Recent EEC regulations have been disastrous for British fish stocks | docks.

67 Pollution is a real threat to the North American basin | bison.

68 Have you had an invitation to the lunch | launch?

69 Did you know if she's Finnish | finished?

70 Yorkshire and Wales are both famous for their pony trials | trails.

71 The police found traces of ash | hash in the back of the car.

72 I'm not feeling so ill | well today.

73 They are old | all things they've grown out of, so you can take them for the jumble sale.

74 My brother-in-law left Euston | Houston early this morning so he should get here tonight.

75 The profitability of North Sea oil rigs is very dependent on the quality of the crude | crew they find.

65 ...
66 ...
67 ...
68 ...
69 ...
70 ...
71 ...
72 ...
73 ...
74 ...
75 ...

Subtotal ..... / 25

76 You can buy logs by the barrow barrel load at the local timber works

77 I hear you've got a new rival arrival

78 Who was responsible for sending the infantry inventory ?

79 We'll be letting them have a newer system new assistant if they want one

80 He works for a company called JMB J & B

81 Have you read the latest book on Watergate by H A R J Haldeman?

82 Some motels now have hairdryers air-dryers in the cloakrooms

83 Recent legislation makes it imperative that we men women work together to help each other

84 The Social Services try to ensure that children who need them get free three meals every day

85 It's Richard's birthday birthday on Sunday so he'll have to do it on Monday

86 I gather their child is autistic artistic

87 She was terribly scared scarred as a result of the accident

88 This year Britain's top carsman rowed horseman rider to his third world title

76 ...
77 ...
78 ...
79 ...
80 ...
81 ...
82 ...
83 ...
84 ...
85 ...
86 ...
87 ...
88 ...

89 He's an eternal internal student

90 At Kilverstone Wildlife Park they've got an Andean Indian buffalo

91 In England all rod road users must have a licence

92 I'd like you to be responsible for the personal personnel side of the deal

93 Would you describe somebody who is interested in gulls girls as a 'birdwatcher'?

94 Who's going to propose the loyal royal toast?

95 City would never have scored if it hadn't been for that free freak kick by Tueart

96 Such measures have never previously been taken in the absence of a president precedent

97 When I saw the train terrain I realized I would never catch him

98 We haven't had any more news today to date

99 'You're obese!' a beast!' she said, looking at him in disgust

100 I've just heard that these tests have been pirated piloted in Japan ✔

89 ...
90 ...
91 ...
92 ...
93 ...
94 ...
95 ...
96 ...
97 ...
98 ...
99 ...
100 ...

Subtotal ... / 25

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Oxford Placement Test 2 A

Look at the example below. Listen to the tape. You will hear the example *once* only. Decide which word you hear, 'soap', or 'soup'.

a Will you get me some soap | soup at the supermarket?

The word was 'soup', so 'soup' is underlined. Now look at these examples, and listen to the tape again. This time, you underline the words you hear. For example, if you hear 'shorts' underline 'shorts'.

b The team need new shirts | shorts

c They've recently developed a new kind of vine | wine around here

The words on the tape were 'shorts' and 'vine', so the correct answers look like this:

b The team need new shirts | shorts

c They've recently developed a new kind of vine | wine around here

Now the test will begin. Listen to the tape and underline the words you hear.

1 What do you think of the Bell School teachers | T-shirts ?
I really like them.

2 He asked if it could be given in a bit late and I said
yes, today | yesterday was OK.

3 I think McEnroe's winning it to love | two-love

4 I'd have red | rked to help him.

5 At least | last you understand what I mean.

6 She's teaching several 'O' | low level classes this year.

7 He was lapped | rapped by his team-mates because he hadn't trained hard enough.

1	...
2	...
3	...
4	...
5	...
6	...
7	...

Name .....

Total A ..../ 100 Total B1 ..../ 50 Grand total ..../.....
Total B2 ..../ 50

8 Seals are culled | killed each summer off the Newfoundland coast.

9 They asked if I was sending anybody and I said
Mike or myself | I might go myself.

10 I'm afraid we've only fifty | fifteen left in stock.

11 She likes | lacks that little extra bit of class.

12 He's just become a member of the Hockey | Jockey Club.

13 They're going to Wrexham | Wroxham for their holidays.

14 What do you think those ships | shapes on the horizon are?

15 Did you realize he slept | slipped out last night?

16 It's an amazing | amusing story, isn't it?

17 The roads were absolutely impossible | impassable last week.

18 Sooner or later we'll have to chuck | check them out.

19 Is it ready for typing | taping yet?

20 Most of the new wavebands | new-wave bands sound really good.

21 We need a cork | chalk board in our classroom. ✔

22 Do they have many orchids | orchards in Tunisia?

23 I see Oxford University is advertising the chair in
metaphysics | matter physics.

24 Can you help Bridget | Richard to get it finished?

25 It'll be difficult to keep within these perimeters | parameters but you must try.

8	...
9	...
10	...
11	...
12	...
13	...
14	...
15	...
16	...
17	...
18	...
19	...
20	...
21	...
22	...
23	...
24	...
25	...

Subtotal ..../ 25

26 I think they now give the weather report from the [new | news] studio.

27 He's working on a new [model | module] at the moment.

28 I must say I quite [fancy | fancied] going to see his latest film.

29 She's one of the most [evil- | even-] tempered people I've ever met.

30 His house is really [tidy | tiny].

31 The bathroom is small, but it's got a [flush | flash] too.

32 Iran has been particularly successful in reducing its dependence on American [experts | exports].

33 Is [lamb | land] cheaper in Australia than it is here?

34 Do you think he feels a bit [better | bitter] about it now?

35 In the late sixties neo-colonialist attitudes could have posed a real threat to the [Kenyan Asian | Kenyan Nation].

36 We just can't get our gardener to cut the [hedges | edges] neatly.

37 If you add [soda | cider] it'll make it nice and fizzy.

38 She said that as far as she was concerned we'd [been | be] no trouble at all.

26 ...
27 ...
28 ...
29 ...
30 ...
31 ...
32 ...
33 ...
34 ...
35 ...
36 ...
37 ...
38 ...

39 The longer we went on the [hotter | harder] it became.

40 If you're looking for John I think he's in the [lab | lav].

41 He's teaching the computer to play a new game — not chess but something [similar | simpler].

42 Did you know your rear offside light's [on | gone]?

43 I'm leaving! I'm not going to let you [run | ruin] my life.

44 That was the first of a series of [dramatic | traumatic] events that took place in his teens.

45 My son got a new pair of [flippers | slippers] to take on holiday with him.

46 If only one could test learners' [attitudes | aptitudes] it'd be a lot easier to group them.

47 I'm told there are a lot of [tigers | Thai girls] in the north of the country.

48 I wish that [guy | I] could be given more help at times.

49 The main advantage of this material is that it's [expendable | expandable].

50 Do you know if this text is [copyright | copied right]?

✔

39 ...
40 ...
41 ...
42 ...
43 ...
44 ...
45 ...
46 ...
47 ...
48 ...
49 ...
50 ...

Subtotal ..../ 25

61

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

51 Have you [had | heard] the results yet?

52 Is Susie's horse ready for [shoeing | showing] ?

53 Do you know if he's gone [aboard | abroad] yet?

54 To get accurate results you need to use a wide range of [text- | test-] types.

55 She's a member of the [National | Natural] Childbirth Trust.

56 She bought him a [Bulova | pullover] for Christmas.

57 He was best known for his work in [musicals | music halls] in the fifties.

58 It was reported on TV recently that Milton Friedman is [back in | backing] Britain.

59 Several teams have paid dearly for underestimating [the Brazilians | their resilience].

60 I think he said he wouldn't be back till [eight | ate].

61 Are we going to be able to send him the [remainder | reminder] in time?

62 I don't really think she has any intention of [leaving | living] with him.

51 ...
52 ...
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58 ...
59 ...
60 ...
61 ...
62 ...

63 Seeing that has made me feel really [angry | hungry].

64 Let's [eat | heat] that stew up tomorrow. It seems a pity to waste it.

65 Have you [tasted | tested] it yet?

66 I honestly thought you were [joking | choking].

67 I don't know if he [hurt | heard] her or not.

68 Watson left the pits [fast | first], but Piquet was soon after him.

69 Do you have any idea what the [prize | price] is?

70 I can't put anything in this [bucket | pocket] because there's a hole in it.

71 You know [I | I'd] like to see you whenever possible.

72 The only way to get there in winter is by the old route up the mountain [pass | path].

73 Are you going to help us get the [vote | boat] out?

74 Have you seen those [bills | pills] I was looking for?

75 I believe Peter's [chairman | German], isn't he?

63 ...
64 ...
65 ...
66 ...
67 ...
68 ...
69 ...
70 ...
71 ...
72 ...
73 ...
74 ...
75 ...

Subtotal ... / 25

62

76 He won several Grand Prix races in the [Surtees | thirties] before he retired.

77 Was the [Mini | money] recognizable afterwards?

78 He works for the [highlands | islands] tourist board.

79 James was one of the [Stuarts | stewards], wasn't he?

80 The finance committee were told that the extra [house | hours] would cost £40,000.

81 They'd be surprised if they realized what people like [Caroline | Carol and I] have to do.

82 [A. | HA.] Foyt is the only driver to have won the 'Ind. 500' three years in a row.

83 The conference is scheduled for Friday the [13th | 30th] of May.

84 I'm afraid I've no idea if [they | they've] finished.

85 I could do with [an ice-cold | a nice, cold] drink.

86 He's recently become an [MB | MP].

87 Farmers in the north and in Scotland lost a lot of [lambs | rams] last winter.

76 ...
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79 ...
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83 ...
84 ...
85 ...
86 ...
87 ...

88 This [pen | pan] is no use — it keeps leaking.

89 It was several hours before they [phoned | found] us.

90 Cambridge is about 60 miles from Norwich and 60 [also | or so] from London.

91 The police said they would [fine | find] the offender immediately.

92 If you like the style there's a wide choice of [colours | collars] available.

93 The [race | nce] was ruined by the rain.

94 He [ran | rang] off before we could ask his name.

95 That was quite a [flight | fright] we had, wasn't it?

96 Import restrictions on [Catalan | cattle and] sheep are now likely to be lifted.

97 I've [strained | sprained] my wrist so I won't be able to play tomorrow.

98 What he said was true in [either | neither] case.

99 [Norwich | Knowledge] grew faster than ever before after the Renaissance.

100 This [election | selection] doesn't give one much of a choice, does it?

88 ...
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93 ...
94 ...
95 ...
96 ...
97 ...
98 ...
99 ...
100 ...

Subtotal ..../ 25

Appendix 3:

TV Programme
Worksheet

Programme no.: _____
No. of news items: _____
Topics:

1.	2.
3.	4.
5.	6.
7.	8.
9.	10.
11.	12.
13.	14.
16.	18.
19.	20.

Vocabulary:

1.	2.
3.	4.
5.	6.
7.	8.
9.	10.
11.	12.
13.	14.
15.	16.
17.	18.
19.	20.

Appendix 4:

Programme 1
Vocabulary

1. Bush
   Kuwait
   garner support
   UN resolution
2. Syrian President Assad
   Geneva
   definitive answer
   hostages in Lebanon
   unusual alliance
3. Egyptian President Mubarak
   Cairo
   optimistic
   pessimistic
   evacuation project
4. Yemen
   UN Security Council resolution
5. Baghdad
   use blood to scrawl on the wall
6. Iraqi President Saddam Hussein
   inspect league of Republican guard troops
   lift night time curfew
7. Poland
   Presidential election
   first round voting
   Jaruzelski
   Walesa
   Mazowiecki
   Tyminski
8. Union of HK Employees
   work to rule
   8-hour shift
   executives of Union
   disciplinary action
   stage a 3-day protest
   solidarity
9. plans under way
   combat car theft and smuggling
   liaison meetings
10. Broadcasting Authority
    cable TV
    HK Cable Communications
    Sir Roger Lobo
    put in a bid
11. relaxation of control over hire of
    petition
12. port and airport project
    massive project
    mammouth project
    boost economic growth
13. Federation of Students
    pamphlets

1

unilateral move

14. campaign
    John Major
    Michael Heseltine
    Douglas Hurd

15. Lithuanian President
    Baltic states (Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia)
    crush independence strive
    Gorbachev
    Union Treaty

Appendix 5:

7

A post-industrial industry

1 Pre-listening

Task 1 Building a context

Do you recognize this tree? What does it produce? (A hint: it represents a very large proportion of Malaysia's Gross National Product.)

Think of some of the things in whose manufacture it is used. Write down at least three of them. Tell the rest of the class your suggestions. Your teacher will put them all on the board.

You can now see why this product is so important strategically. It is also important because it is a natural product, which is produced without using fuels such as oil or coal. You will hear more about this in the taped discussion.

2 Listening

Task 1 Predicting language

This exercise is to help you 'hear' more easily some of the weakly-pronounced words in the passage. Use your knowledge of English grammar to help you fill in the gaps in this extract from the passage.

Most manufacturing industries ..... based on fossil fuels — coal ..... oil. Now the problem ..... that these ..... not last for ever. They ..... finite. Sooner ..... later they ..... run out. Now rubber is ..... natural product. ..... only energy source involved ..... its creation is sunlight. Now sunlight we hope ..... outlast coal ..... oil. Sunlight ..... free, so ..... is much cheaper ..... produce natural rubber ...

Check your answers in pairs and then with the rest of the class.

Task 2 Predicting information

Now you know something about the subject of the discussion. What other aspects of it do you think will be covered in the recording? Choose as many of the ideas below as you think are likely.

- ☐ a list of other countries where rubber is important
- ☐ a discussion of how rubber is produced in Malaysia
- ☐ a discussion of economic and social problems in Malaysia
- ☐ a discussion of the problems with fossil fuels

Compare your answers in pairs.

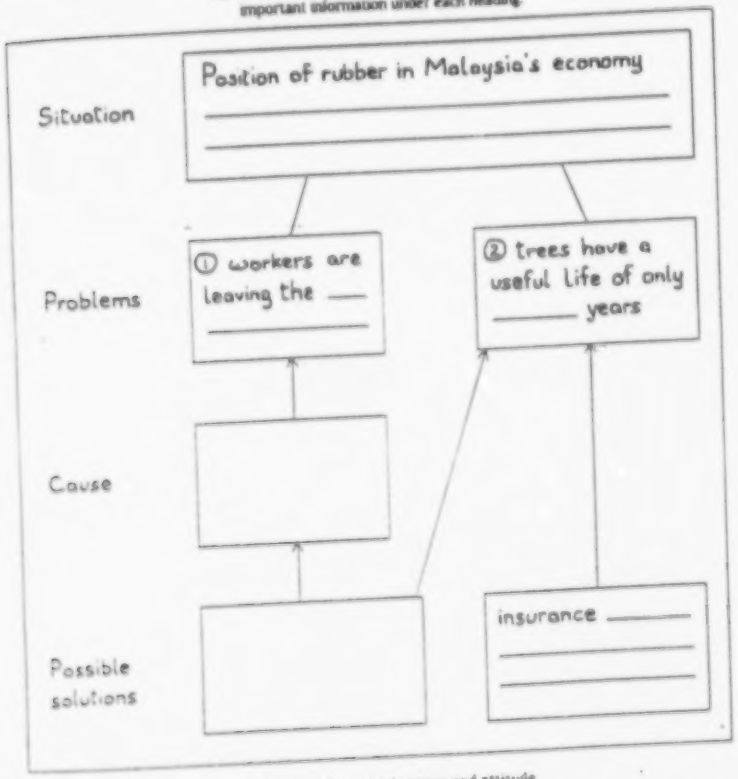
Task 3 Getting the main ideas

You are going to hear a discussion between two experts. It is about a situation, a number of problems, and their possible solutions.

Look at the chart on page 32 carefully before you start to listen, and make sure that you understand it.

67

Listen to Part one of the discussion and fill in the chart with the important information under each heading.



Task 4 Recognizing tone and attitude

Listen to Part one of the discussion again. There are three speakers: the Chairperson (a woman) and two 'experts' (both men), Andrew Frobisher and Dr Harry Benson.

Which of the adjectives opposite describe the attitudes and emotions of each of the speakers? Add any more that you think would be appropriate.

	Chairperson	Mr Frobisher	Dr Benson
nervous			
self-satisfied			
scornful			
irritated			
pompous			
confident			
annoyed			
resentful			
amused			
worried			
passionate			
nostalgic			
relieved			

Compare your answers in pairs and with the rest of the class.

Try to decide at what points in the discussion the speakers showed the different attitudes and emotions. Listen again to confirm your ideas. ✔

Task 5 Listening for detail

Read these sentences below and on page 34, then listen to Part one of the discussion again and fill in the gaps with the detailed information.

1 Rubber represents approximately ..... % of Malaysia's Gross National Product.

2 Each rubber tree is tapped by hand ..... day.

3 One worker is capable of looking after a total of ..... trees.

4 A rubber tree's useful life is about ..... years.

5 The number of Malaysians working directly with rubber in 1981 was .....

Task 6 Getting the main ideas

Now listen to part two of the discussion. Dr Benson discussed diversification on rubber plantations by raising livestock.

He shows the audience an OHP (overhead projection). Fill in his OHP with the correct information.

Ways of diversifying economy

Livestock

	Type of animal	Successful	Reasons
1			
2			
3			

3 Follow-up

Think about the whole discussion — Parts one and two — and try these exercises.

Task 1 Detecting hostility

Dr Benson and Mr Frobisher were clearly not very fond of each other! Listen again and collect examples of how they showed it. The table below may help you.

	by Dr Benson	*by Mr Frobisher*
Interruption		
Nasty comments		
Other		

Task 2 Judging performance

Which of the two experts did you like more? Or did you find them equally impossible? Would this type of behaviour occur in a public discussion in your country? How would speakers have shown hostility in your country?

Did you think the Chairperson was:

effective
too weak
simply facing an impossible situation?

Tell the rest of the class what you think.

Task 3 Dictation

Do you think that the prediction task on page 31 helped you to 'hear' the unstressed words better?

If you have a language laboratory or your own cassette-recorder available, choose a very short section of the recording (not more than 30 seconds) and listen to it, using the 'pause' and 'stop' buttons. Try to write down the speaker's actual words. When you are satisfied, check what you have written against the actual transcript on page 82.

Did you leave out any words because you did not hear them? Play the tape again and follow the words on the transcript.

Appendix 6:

QUESTIONNAIRE

Name:

Course:

1. Which activities do you like the best in this course? Why?

2. Which activities do you like the least in this course? Why?

(Activities:
listening exercises, pair work, analysing newspaper articles, discussions, group work--- presenting stories, writing, correcting mistakes and error analysis, grammar, video programmes, conversations, pronunciation, analyzing short stories etc)

3. Listening Segment

   a. Do you find the listening exercises difficult?

   b. If 'Yes', why? (e.g. speed, vocab, subject matter)

   c. Besides doing listening exercises in class, do you listen to other English programmes regularly? If 'Yes', what? How often ? When did you start this habit (before attending this course or after attending this course)?

   d. Do you think your listening ability has improved after doing the listening exercises?

4. Do you find this course interesting, boring or neither one of them? Why?

5. Do you find this course useful, useless or neither one of them? Why?

6. Any other comments?